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## 4 NEWS UPDATE

## 19 EUROPEAN FOCUS

## 21 LIMERICK'S DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR

For the first time in Ireland, the people of Limerick will have a unique opportunity in June to elect a Directly Elected Mayor (DEM), who will provide democratic and developmental leadership, linking local and national government in an innovative way and in response to Limerick's needs and priorities, writes Dr Brid Quinn.

## 27 DUBLIN CLIMATE ACTION TOURISM

Dublin City Council's new tourism strategy, with a core focus on climate action and sustainability in tourism, represents a strong statement of intent to develop the city as an innovative destination for locals and visitors in the years ahead. Dublin also won the European Capital of Smart Tourism Award for 2024.

## 31 HOUSING BUDGET 2024

Here's a recap of the unprecedented package of close to €7 billion in Budget 2024, which will include over €5 billion in capital funding for housing, in addition to significant funding for local authorities, water, planning and heritage.

## 37 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

Limerick City and County Council was named 'Local Authority of the Year 2023' at Chambers Ireland's 20th Excellence in Local Government Awards ceremony in Dublin, which once again served to showcase and celebrate the best of local government in Ireland.

## 45 WOMEN IN POLITICS

With the 2024 Local Elections taking place in June, See Her Elected – the government funded programme which supports women from rural Ireland to become county councillors – is continuing its workshops and live radio training in a bid to get more female candidates to put their names on the ballot papers.

## 52 LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

Ongoing challenges faced by councillors, especially in relation to emerging issues such as online intimidation and physical attacks, which are impacting on the wellbeing and safety of elected members, were highlighted at the 8th Annual Public Lecture Series of UCC's Centre for Local and Regional Governance.

## 55 SAFETY & WELLBEING

Immediate action is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of councillors according to the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA). Both representative bodies have called for steps to be taken to tackle the growing level of abuse and intimidation suffered by our elected representatives.

## 59 COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

The Community Enterprise Association Ireland and the Western Development Commission's Connected Hubs team have launched the first 'Guidance Handbook for Good Governance' in a bid to strengthen and bolster the governance, integrity and oversight of community enterprise centres and hubs across the National Hub Network.

## 61 LAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The Land Development Agency's purchase of lands on Dublin's northside, which will deliver a new community involving cost rental, affordable purchase and social housing, will be the biggest single State housing project in decades. With planning permission already in place for over 1,800 homes, the development at the Clongriffin site also has the potential to deliver in excess of 2,300 affordable and social homes.

## 64 IRISH PLANNING AWARDS

The eight category winners of the IPI Planning Awards for 2023, including the President's Award which was won by Limerick City and Council, have showcased the diverse range of projects taking place at local, county and regional levels throughout Ireland.



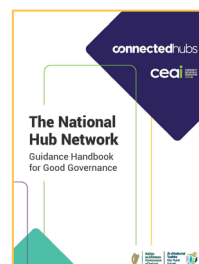
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## 71 SAFE HOME IRELAND

Safe Home Ireland has directly assisted 2,280 Irish-born people to secure accommodation on their return home since the charity was first set up in 2000. This has been achieved with the support of local authorities and housing associations across the country, according to CEO Karen McHugh, who outlines what sets it apart from other service providers.

## 75 SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP

The County and City Management Association (CCMA) has collaborated with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) under the SEAI's Public Sector 'Partnership' Support Programme to enable local authorities to reach their decarbonising targets by 2030.

## 77 GOOD PRACTICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Use of solar power, innovative recruitment initiatives, developing tourism and education, ensuring effective cross-sector collaboration, assisting accommodation needs and displaying good practice in the roll out of a digital strategy all featured to showcase local authority innovation at the 2023 Good Practice in Local Government Seminar.

## 83 MAYO NATIONAL PARK AGREEMENT

A unique heritage twinning agreement between the national parks in Mayo and California aims to foster international co-operation between both parks to support their shared goals in nature conservation and to promote tourism and cultural exchange. A signing ceremony for the five-year 'Sister Park' agreement will take place in early 2024.

## 87 PLANNING LEGISLATION

Reforms in Ireland's planning system are afoot following government approval of the Planning and Development Bill 2023, following a lengthy review of the planning system. The legislation aims to bring greater clarity, certainty and consistency on how planning decisions are made, and to make the system more coherent and user-friendly.

## 91 GALWAY TOURISM STRATEGY

Galway County Council has adopted the county's first ever tourism strategy, which will be formally launched in early 2024, to spread the benefits of a growing tourism economy across the county, promote sustainable tourism development and support existing jobs and create new employment opportunities across the sector over the next eight years.

## 92 FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Fingal County Council has placed the first cycle-friendly roundabout at the centre of its new housing and parks development in Mulhuddart. Considered the norm in many European countries, this is the first of many for Fingal as further cycle-friendly roundabouts are envisaged for upcoming schemes, with other local authorities expected to follow suit.

## 107 CYBER SECURITY

Local authorities have an important role to play in information sharing, networking and supporting their communities, according to Independent Senator Gerard Craughwell, who says that for Foreign Direct Investment to continue, it's essential that Ireland meets the fast-changing demands of cyber threats.

## 108 NORTHERN & WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Brendan Mooney, Acting Assistant Director of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) outlines the Assembly's current projects, and provides a specific focus on NWRA's role as the managing authority for the €217m ERDF Regional Programme 2021-2027 for the Northern & Western Region of Ireland.

## 116 THE HOUSING AGENCY

The Housing Agency's Secure Tenancy Affordable Rental (STAR) investment scheme, with a budget of €750m, aims to deliver over 4,000 Cost Rental homes by 2027 and to assist those private households who are experiencing affordability pressures in the rental market.



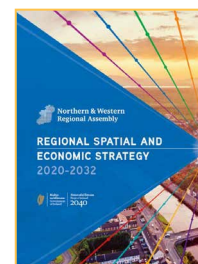
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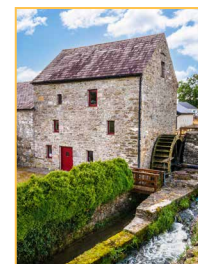
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